

Notorious Donetsk Rebel Commander Arseny 'Motorola' Pavlov Killed in Home

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Arseny Pavlov riding a motorcycle in 2014. **Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP**

Arseny Pavlov, a military commander for the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR), has been killed in his home in eastern Ukraine.

Pavlov, better known by his call-sign "Motorola," had led the "Sparta Battalion" against Ukrainian government forces since 2014.

The 33-year-old was killed by a remotely-activated explosion in the lift of his building, the Donetsk Ministry of Defense announced. It described Pavlov's death as "a terrorist act, carried out by Ukrainian special forces."

Speaking on Sunday night, DNR leader Alexander Zakharchenko said that he had lost a close friend. His statement described Pavlov as a ["hero of the republic."](#)

"We are currently carrying out an investigation not only to find who planted the bomb, but

who ordered the hit. There will be no mercy. We can assume that [Ukrainian President Petro] Poroshenko has broken our truce and declared war on us," Zakharchenko said.

Motorola is not the first rebel commander to have been killed in mysterious circumstances. Over the past two years, several other deaths have been ascribed to Ukrainian military actions. In most cases, friends, colleagues and relatives have put the blame squarely with rival rebel commanders or Russian security services.

The DNR leader previously accused Kiev of trying to assassinate Pavlov in June, when an [explosion took place at a hospital](#) where the rebel commander was receiving medical treatment.

Pavlov, a Russian citizen originally from the northern Komi republic, has been linked to a number of war crimes, namely the execution of prisoners of war. The commander reportedly confessed to the crime to in a telephone interview with a Russian reporter in April 2015, where he apparently claimed to have shot 15 captured soldiers.

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— Антон Комолов (@gorlowka_kun) [October 16, 2016](#)

The Ukrainian conflict has killed more than 9,300 people since it began in April 2014.

Almost one and a half million people have left their homes as a result of the conflict, according to the Parliamentary Assembly for the Council of Europe.

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